

ASSOCIATED PRESS

24 May 1984

REAGAN TRAVELS TO CIA, HAILS CASEY
BY TERENCE HUNT
LANGLEY, VA.

President Reagan praised the work of CIA Director William Casey and the spy agency's employees Thursday as "an inspiration to your fellow Americans and people everywhere," while the White House said Reagan retains full confidence in Casey.

The president traveled to CIA headquarters for a ground-breaking ceremony one day after a House subcommittee accused Casey of playing a major role in an organized and possibly illegal political espionage effort in which Carter administration documents were obtained for use in Reagan's 1980 election campaign.

Casey, waiting to greet Reagan at a helicopter landing zone here, refused to talk to reporters about the congressional report. Gesturing toward a network television crew, Casey said, "I don't want to talk with those mikes."

Stepping from his helicopter, Reagan shook hands with Casey, and the two men climbed into a waiting limousine and rode several hundred yards to the ceremony.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the trip to the CIA "was long planned. It's certainly an endorsement of the role that the CIA and the role its director is playing there."

While saying Reagan still had full confidence in Casey, Speakes added, "I don't think the president can pass judgment on the (congressional) charges because he hasn't read it or been briefed on it."

Hundreds of CIA employees left their work and sat on a sunny hillside near the agency's main building to catch a glimpse of Reagan.

"Without you, our nation's safety would be more vulnerable, and our security fragile and endangered," the president told the crowd.

"The work you do each day is essential to the survival and to the spread of human freedom," he added. "You remain the eyes and ears of the free world. You are the tripwire over which the totalitarian rule must stumble in their quest for global domination."

Reagan said that the CIA "cannot operate effectively unless its necessary secrets are maintained even in this, the most open and free country on Earth.

"We cannot expect you or your informants to endanger life and work because of carelessness, sensationalism or unnecessary exposure to risk," Reagan added.

Continued

24 May 1984

CIA/WILLIAM
CASEY

JENNINGS: The CIA is planning to build an addition to its headquarters building in Virginia. The dedication ceremony would not usually attract national attention, but this was the day after a House subcommittee put something of a cloud over CIA Director William Casey for his part in the Carter briefing book affair. As Mike Von Fremd reports, Mr. Casey and the president were together today.

VONFREMD: The last thing Director William Casey expects to face inside CIA headquarters is a reporter and roving camera crew questioning him about the briefing book controversy. UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Are you gonna stay on your job, sir? WILLIAM\J.\CASEY (CIA Director): I don't like to talk about (unintelligible).

VONFREMD: Casey said he'd have a statement later, but then decided against that, apparently hoping that the controversy will just blow over. And the CIA public relations director was doing his best to leave the impression that the president's visit means Casey's job is safe. UNIDENTIFIED CIA PR DIRECTOR): I think it's a great show of support for the CIA.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What about being personal?

UNIDENTIFIED CIA PR DIRECTOR: Mr. Casey is a big part of the CIA.

UNIDENTIFIED ANNOUNCER (introducing speakers at dedication ceremony): Ladies and gentlemen, the president of the United States, the vice president of the United States, Director Casey.

VONFREMD: And President Reagan was at Casey's side in the middle of CIA headquarters in front of hundreds of cheering employees. Camera crews were asked by the CIA to take only wide shots of the staff to protect all identities. But the agency clearly wanted shots of this, the ground-breaking of the \$190 million building to help these people do what President Reagan called their essential jobs. PRESIDENT REAGAN: You are the tripwire over which the totalitarian rule must stumble in their quest of global domination.

VONFREMD: While other aides listened, the president's chief of staff, James Baker, whose testimony is at odds with Casey's, chose not to attend. And while the president heaped praise on the CIA, he declined to directly praise Casey. But as one White House adviser said, quote, 'This just wasn't the time or place where the president needed to say 'I'm behind you 1,000 percent.' Mike Von Fremd, ABC News, the White House.

2.

"When historians look back on all of this," Reagan said, "I'm sure they will conclude that no one has played a more important role in this exciting new era than all of you here in CIA."

"Your work, the work of your director, the other top officials have been an inspiration to your fellow Americans and to people everywhere."

Reagan used a silver shovel to turn over dirt for a 1.1 million-square-foot addition which will double the size of CIA headquarters.

Chuck Wilson, the agency's deputy director of information, said the additional room is necessary because the CIA is adding so many computers that people are being crowded out of offices.

STAT He said the addition will permit CIA employes scattered in offices throughout the metropolitan Washington area to work at the main CIA complex.